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UNCLAS LJUBLJANA 000653

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/NCE

SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [SI](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVENIA: NATIONAL ELECTIONS CALLED FOR 03 OCTOBER

REF: A. LJUBLJANA 539

[B](#). LJUBLJANA 547

[C](#). LJUBLJANA 636 AND PREVIOUS

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

[1](#). (U) SUMMARY: Slovenian President Janez Drnovsek has called for National Assembly elections to be held on 03 October. Although the official electoral campaign starts on 03 September, the deadline for registering official candidate lists is 08 September. END SUMMARY

CHOOSING THE DATE FOR THE ELECTION

[2](#). (U) Slovenian President Janez Drnovsek announced on 09 July that National Assembly elections will be held on 03 October. The Law on Parliamentary Elections stipulates that the President of the Republic must call elections between 75 and 135 days before the "expiration of four years since the first session of the previous parliament." The Law also dictates that the elections must take place no more than two months, and no less than 15 days, before the date the previously elected National Assembly had its first session. Given these limitations, elections had to be scheduled between 29 August and 10 October.

ELECTION CAMPAIGNING

[3](#). (U) According to law, campaigning for the National Assembly elections may not begin until one month prior to the election. Therefore, campaigning will officially begin on 03 September.

HOW THE DEPUTIES ARE ELECTED

[4](#). (U) Elections to the Slovenian National Assembly operate on a proportional system. The voters, divided geographically into eight electoral units, elect eleven deputies in each unit. Additionally, the Hungarian and the Italian minorities each elect one representative for a total of 90 deputies. A party must pass a four percent threshold nationally in order to get any seats in the National Assembly.

[5](#). (U) Slovenian voters are offered party lists with the candidates from their geographic unit. If a party passes the four percent threshold, the number of deputies it will send to the National Assembly from its list will be based on what percentage of the vote the party received. [NOTE: While preferential voting, i.e. the ability of voters to choose a specific candidate on a party's list, did not occur in 2000, it did take place in the recent European Parliamentary elections (ref A and B). It is not yet certain if preferential voting will occur in the 03 October parliamentary elections. END NOTE.]

COMMENT

[6](#). (SBU) In the 2000 elections, eight parties surpassed the minimum four percent threshold to obtain seats in the National Assembly. Pundits believe that a similar number of parties are expected to take seats in the fall elections, albeit not necessarily the same parties that are currently represented. We note, of course, that public opinion polls in Slovenia - especially those coordinated by the left-of-center media - have been less than reliable in the recent past and particularly in the lead up to the European Parliamentary elections. Although it is too early to predict how specific parties will perform, many observers are skeptical of the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDS) ability to repeat its election 2000 success when it won the support of 36 percent of voters. Indeed, if European Parliamentary elections are any indication (ref B), the ruling center-left coalition will be faced with a vigorous challenge from the center-right opposition parties. Despite the ban on pre-September 3 electioneering, battle lines are

already being drawn. The drama surrounding former FoMin
Rupel and the Assembly for the Republic (ref C) is evidence
of this, as are recent public statements by the avowedly
apolitical (but looking very political) former President
Kucan from his perch atop Forum 21. END COMMENT

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